

## **APPARENT SKILL GAME USED AS A BONUS ROUND ON A GAMING MACHINE**

1        This application relates to a gaming machine and more  
2 particularly to a gaming machine in which a bonus round game  
3 appears to be a game of skill or knowledge, but in fact, is a  
4 game of pure chance in which the outcome of the play of the  
5 gaming machine is randomly determined prior to the game of  
6 skill or knowledge being displayed on the gaming machine.

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### **Background of the Invention**

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9        In the typical gaming casino, there are many types of  
10 casino games. Electronic and mechanical gaming machines have  
11 a significant share of the casino floor and can be generally  
12 grouped into two categories: games of pure chance and games  
13 of skill.

14        Representative of a game of pure chance is the conven-  
15 tional slot machine. After making a wager, the player  
16 activates the slot machine by pulling a handle or pressing a  
17 button. The reels of the slot machine spin and, when the  
18 reels stop spinning, the outcome is displayed to the player.  
19 Winning combinations result in a payout to the player based on  
20 the amount of the player's wager. The player does not have to

1 make a decisions during the play of the slot machine that may  
2 affect the outcome of the spinning of the reels.

3 Representative of a game of skill is the conventional  
4 video draw poker gaming machine. After making a wager, the  
5 player is dealt five cards face up. The player selects which  
6 cards, if any, the player wishes to hold, the unheld cards are  
7 discarded and replacement cards are dealt for the discarded  
8 cards. The final five card hand is analyzed to determine its  
9 poker hand ranking and the player is paid for winning poker  
10 hand rankings based on the amount of the player's wager.  
11 Because of the hold and draw decisions made by the player, the  
12 skill of the player can affect the success or not of the  
13 player during the play of video draw poker.

14 There are also other electronic casino games that have  
15 been introduced into gaming casinos in recent years that use a  
16 "secondary event" bonus round to provide additional payouts to  
17 the player. In a typical secondary event bonus round game,  
18 the player first achieves some outcome on the main game or  
19 first level of the gaming machine. This first level outcome  
20 that occurs during the play of the basic casino game qualifies  
21 the player to play a secondary event bonus round in which the  
22 player engages in another chance event to determined the

1 amount to be won by the player.

2 One of the most popular secondary event bonus round games  
3 was "Wheel of Gold" marketed by Anchor Gaming Company. This  
4 game used a three reel slot machine as the main game or first  
5 level. If the player lined up a "Spin" symbol on the pay line  
6 of the third reel, the player qualified to go on to the  
7 secondary event bonus round. In the secondary event bonus  
8 round of the "Wheel of Gold" game, a rotating wheel similar to  
9 a Big Six Wheel is spun by the player who then receives the  
10 payout shown on the pay line when the wheel stops rotating.

11 Other secondary event bonus round games have followed.  
12 On the ODYSSEY multi-game machine marketed by Silicon Gaming  
13 Company, there is a secondary event game known as "Fort Knox"  
14 used in connection with a reel slot machine game. Each time  
15 the player spins the reels of the slot machine, a random  
16 number between 0 and 9 is selected. The random number  
17 selected is compared to a pre-established ten digit "code  
18 number" and when the player has successfully matched all ten  
19 digits of the code number, the player is taken to a secondary  
20 event bonus round screen in which the player selects one of  
21 three doors behind which is a payout amount awarded to the  
22 player.

1       Secondary event bonus round games have been added to  
2 video poker games also. In a game known as "Million Coin  
3 Scratch Poker" marketed by Boyd Gaming Group, the main game  
4 is a standard video draw poker game. Whenever the player  
5 achieves a flush in the main video poker game, the player is  
6 paid for achieving a flush and then is taken to a second  
7 screen in which the secondary event game is displayed. The  
8 secondary event game involves the player selecting five cards  
9 from a fifty-two card face down display; in effect, the player  
10 is playing a hand of five card stud poker. The player wins  
11 payouts depending on whether the player achieves particular  
12 poker hands during this secondary event game of five card stud  
13 poker.

14           There is a need in the casino gaming business for new and  
15 creative games, including new and creative secondary event  
16 bonus round games, to capture the interest of the gaming  
17 patron and stimulate additional casino play.

18           It is an object of the present invention to provide a new  
19   form of a secondary event casino game that gives the player  
20   the feel that he is playing a game of skill or knowledge, but  
21   in fact the outcome of the secondary event bonus round game  
22   has been predetermined.

1           It is a feature of the present invention to provide a  
 2 secondary event bonus round game in which the player  
 3 participates in an apparent game of skill or knowledge, but  
 4 the outcome of the secondary event game has been  
 5 predetermined. At the commencement of the secondary event  
 6 game, an outcome is randomly determined, i.e. the amount of  
 7 the award to be made to the player is randomly selected from a  
 8 plurality of possible awards. The player then engages in what  
 9 appears to be a game of skill or knowledge which continues  
 10 until the player has achieved a result that awards the player  
 11 the predetermined payout.

12           It is an advantage of the present invention that the  
 13 player is allowed to enjoy the challenge and entertainment of  
 14 participating in a game of skill or knowledge, but the award  
 15 to the player is independent of the player's ability. Thus,  
 16 players of lesser skill or knowledge level are not penalized,  
 17 but are awarded at the same monetary level as the players with  
 18 higher skill or knowledge levels. Also, there is no incentive  
 19 for a player to attempt to improperly manipulate the game of  
 20 skill or knowledge component of the present invention, since  
 21 the award to the player during the secondary event portion of  
 22 the play of the gaming machine has been predetermined.

1 Other objects, features and advantages of the present  
2 invention will become apparent from a consideration of the  
3 following detailed description.

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### 5 **Summary of the Invention**

6 The present invention comprises the feature of including  
7 an apparent game of skill or knowledge as a secondary event  
8 bonus round game which is won by the player during the play of  
9 a conventional electronic or mechanical gaming machine. A  
10 gaming machine, such as a slot machine, poker game machine,  
11 keno game machine, bingo game machine or other casino game  
12 machine is first played by the player and, upon the occurrence  
13 of a predetermined outcome of the gaming machine, the player  
14 wins an opportunity to play the secondary event bonus round  
15 game. At the commencement of the secondary event bonus round  
16 game, the computer controls of the electronic gaming machine  
17 select the amount of the award to be won by the player during  
18 the play of the secondary event game. The player then plays  
19 out the secondary event bonus round game, which appears to the  
20 player to be a game of skill or knowledge. Regardless of how  
21 the player fares during the play of the secondary event bonus  
22 round game, the play of the secondary event bonus round game

1 continues until the player has achieved the predetermined  
2 amount that was selected by the computer controls. Thus, the  
3 player's skill or knowledge level or ability during the play  
4 of the secondary event bonus round game has no affect on the  
5 amount won by the player during the play of the secondary  
6 event bonus round game.

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### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

9 Figure 1 shows a flow chart that depicts the steps  
10 involved in the method of play of the present invention.

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### **Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments**

13 The method of play of the present invention commences  
14 with a player making a wager and playing a conventional  
15 electronic or mechanical gaming machine. Any suitable  
16 electronic or mechanical gaming machine can be used for the  
17 play of this basic game, such as a slot machine, poker game  
18 machine, keno game machine, bingo game machine or other casino  
19 game machine. During the play of the video slot machine, the  
20 player will achieve winning and losing occurrences as is  
21 conventional.







1 of 500 coins that had been preselected by the computer  
2 controls of the gaming machine to be won by the player during  
3 the "Bonus Round", the secondary event game would be over at  
4 this point. The amount won by the player is paid to the player  
5 by dispensing coins directly from a coin hopper into a payout  
6 tray on the gaming machine, or by accruing credits to the  
7 player on a credit meter of the gaming machine or in any other  
8 conventional manner of paying the player.

9           In the event that the player does not get all five of the  
10 trivia questions correct, the player could then be asked more  
11 trivia questions until the player has five correct answers at  
12 which point the player appears to have earned the 500 credits.

13 In fact the player's skill or knowledge level in answering  
14 the trivia questions is irrelevant since the gaming machine  
15 will continue to ask the player trivia questions until the  
16 player has achieved a sufficient number of correct answers to  
17 earn the predetermined amount of 500 coins as his award for  
18 the "Bonus Round".

Alternatively, the player could be limited to a fixed number of questions to earn the 500 credits. If the player has not earned the entire 500 credits after the fixed number of questions have been asked, then the player could be given

1 the chance to play a consolation round of a different second-  
 2 ary event game. During the consolation round, the player  
 3 would win the necessary additional award to bring his total  
 4 award during the secondary event game up to the predetermined  
 5 amount of 500 coins.

6 For example, the player could get three questions correct  
 7 during the trivia game and earn 300 coins. Since the player  
 8 is still 200 coins short of winning the predetermined amount  
 9 of 500 coins, the player would then be presented with a slot  
 10 machine game. The player would then play the slot machine  
 11 game for one or more spins of the reels until the player has  
 12 achieved a total award of 500 coins.

13 Other methods of displaying this secondary event game to  
 14 the player may be used. For example, suppose the computer  
 15 controls randomly select 1200 coins as the amount to be  
 16 awarded to the player during the secondary event game. The  
 17 player is then asked four trivia questions. The value of each  
 18 correct answer is not shown to the player until after the  
 19 player has answered all four questions. This allows the  
 20 computer controls of the gaming machine to adjust the value of  
 21 each correct answer so that the total award to the player is  
 22 1200 coins regardless of the number of correct answers

1 selected by the player.

2       If the player gets four correct answers, then each  
3 correct answer is shown as being worth 300 coins. If the  
4 player gets three correct answers, then each correct answer is  
5 shown as being worth 400 coins. If the player gets two  
6 correct answers, then each correct answer is shown as being  
7 worth 600 coins. If the player gets only one correct answer,  
8 then each correct answer is shown as being worth 1200 coins.

9       If the player is the village idiot and gets zero correct  
10 answers, then the player can be awarded a booby prize in the  
11 amount of 1200 coins for being qualified to fill the "idiot"  
12 vacancy available at the nearest village. Alternatively, for  
13 no correct answers, the player can be shown a video screen  
14 having a plurality of prize locations. Regardless of the  
15 prize location selected by the player, the amount of the prize  
16 is 1200 coins which corresponds to the award preselected by  
17 the computer controls of the gaming machine before the player  
18 begins play of the secondary event game.

19       The examples discussed above are only representative of  
20 the many ways that the amount of the preselected award can be  
21 displayed to the player during the secondary event game "Bonus  
22 Round". The method of the present invention allows the player

1 to compete in an apparent game of skill or knowledge and yet  
2 still win the randomly selected award preselected by the  
3 computer controls of the gaming machine before the start of  
4 the secondary event game "Bonus Round".

5 Figure 1 shows a flow chart that depicts graphically the  
6 steps involved in the present invention.

7 While the invention has been illustrated with respect to  
8 several specific embodiments thereof, these embodiments should  
9 be considered as illustrative rather than limiting. Various  
10 modifications and additions may be made and will be apparent  
11 to those skilled in the art.